CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND
Parks, Recreation & Waterfront

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Notification to neighboring residents of City Ash trees being treated for Emerald Ash Borer

This ash tree in the city road right of way has been selected by the South Portland City Arborist to be treated to protect it from the invasive Emerald Ash Borer. Treatment is a systemic trunk injection that provides protection for two years.

What is an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)?
The emerald ash borer (EAB) is a destructive, invasive beetle that infests and kills ash trees. EAB adults lay their eggs on ash trees, and after hatching, the larvae burrow under the bark to feed on the tree, rapidly cutting off its supply of water and nutrients. EAB has spread to South Portland in the past few years and it is killing ash trees rapidly.

Why are we treating trees for EAB?
Established Ash Trees offer many benefits! They provide shade and cooling, filter air and stormwater, store carbon, absorb noise, increase property values, reduce stress and anxiety, and make great wildlife habitat. Treatment ensures that an established ash tree can continue to provide benefits for many years to come! It is best to treat ash trees *before* they become heavily infested with EAB and need to be removed. Treatment is the least expensive option in responding to EAB, at least in the near term, according to the State of Oregon department of forestry.

How are trees being treated?
South Portland's contractor Bartlett Tree Experts, a licensed professional pesticide applicator, will be using a trunk injected insecticide (Emamectin benzoate) for ash trees in the City. The insecticide is injected at the base of the tree, directly into the trunk, which then moves throughout the tree through the tree's natural transpiration process. Treatment must be applied while trees are flush with leaves for best results. Emamectin benzoate is highly toxic to EAB in both adult and larval forms and is the most effective treatment available. This is being funded by federal grant dollars entirely.

How will this impact the environment around the tree?
Trunk injections of emamectin benzoate pose little risk to most nontarget species when properly applied by a licensed pesticide applicator. Since the insecticide is injected directly into the tree, only insects living underneath the bark or feeding on the leaves of a treated tree may be directly affected. Predators of EAB, like woodpeckers, are also minimally affected because they only prey on live larvae, not the dead ones that have been exposed to insecticides. Research has shown that fallen tree leaves have very low accumulations of the insecticide and have negligible effects on the organisms who decompose them. Ash tree flowers are very unattractive to pollinator species as they contain no nectar and very little pollen. Plus, trunk injection is applied after flowers have passed by on the trees posing minimal risks to pollinators, like bees and butterflies.

For More Information: Google: Oregon Department of Forestry Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Insecticide Treatments PDF. Have questions, call City Arborist Andy Gagnon at 207-767-7670 ext. 1 or email agagnon@southportland.gov